Five plays & Fourteen photographs

by

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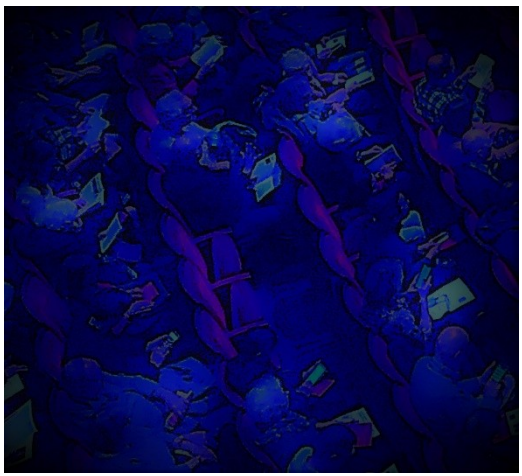
Dirt.

Characters:

Person #1 – Dressed in a dark suit and a bald cap (actor should wear bald cap even if bald)

Person #2 – Dressed the same



Act 1.

Incredibly loud bell sounds over empty stage.

Moment of silence

Person #1 enters the stage holding a bucket filled with very dark (possibly black) dirt. They walk to the opposite side of the stage and begin walking backwards emptying the dirt out in a long line of uneven mounds as they go. Each time the bucket is empty (they should empty several buckets) Person #1 exits the stage and returns with another bucket and continues. Once the line of dirt is complete from one side of the stage to the other Person #1 leaves the stage and returns without a bucket.

Person #1 waits at the nearest edge of the dirt pile.

Moment of silence

Person #1 walks off stage and returns with a large broom brush. Waits a moment. Then begins brushing large sweeps out of the pile in three step intervals. One, Two, Three, Sweep. One, Two Three, Sweep. One, Two, Three, Sweep. They stop when they reach the other end of the pile.

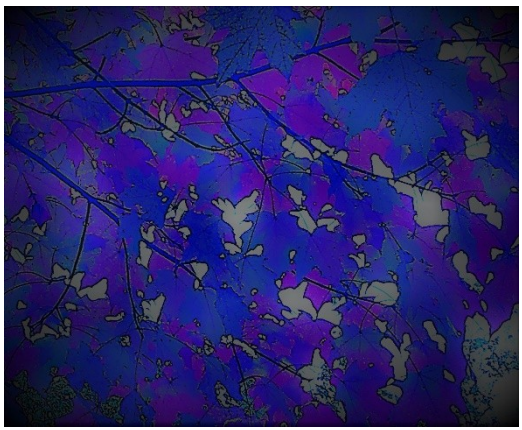
Person #1 walks off stage and returns without the broom.

Moment of silence

Person #1 retrieves a small gold bell from out of their suit pocket. Waits a moment. Then rings the bell. The bell is silent. Without pause Person #1 continues to shake the bell as though it is making a sound.

Still shaking the bell Person #1 walks out to the middle of the pile and buries the bell. They walk back to the end of the pile that they had just come from.

Moment of silence



Person #1 lays down on their chest and begins pushing themselves through the dirt, grotesquely flailing their limbs as they make their way through. As person #1 lays down Person #2 enters the stage and begins running at a frantic pace back and forth from one side of the stage to the other. Person #2 exits the stage once Person #1 reaches the end of the dirt pile.

Person #1 stands as though nothing has happened.

Moment of silence

Person #1 begins looking through the strewn dirt to find the bell. They should be measured and unemotional only bending down once they have found the bell. They return the bell to their pocket.

Person #1 leaves the stage.

Moment of silence

The loud bell from the beginning of the play sounds again.

Moment of silence

END.

Furniture.

Characters:

Eight actors all dressed in black as though they are stage hands.

The play should appear such that it is impossible to tell which is the focus, the actors (as stage hands) or the furniture.

Act 1.

The curtain opens to a pile of six chairs haphazardly thrown together in the middle of the stage. Behind them is a large office style desk.

A long pause of silence on the furniture.

The actors enter the stage. Six of them pick up one chair each and place them in

a straight line along the front of the stage. The remaining two actors lift the table and turn it so that only one side of it is facing the audience. The actors leave the stage.

A long pause of silence on the furniture in its new configuration.

The actors return to the stage, again six taking a chair each and two taking the table. They move the chairs so that they run down the centre of the stage in a line. They move the desk to the left side of the stage so that the audience can see its full length. The actors exit the stage.

A long pause of silence on the furniture in its new configuration.

The actors return to the stage, again six taking a chair each and two taking the table. They place the table in the middle of the stage and arrange the chairs around it in a circle. The actors exit the stage, as they do so one of the actors trips over one of the chair legs, stumbles but doesn't fall.

A long pause of silence on the furniture in its new configuration.

The actors return to the stage, again six taking a chair and two taking the table. This time two of the actors are unsure about who should be taking the table, a

slight confusion arises and then one of the actors rushes off to pick up a chair, slightly behind the timing of the other actors. They arrange the table so that its back is facing the audience. They then place four of the chairs in front of the table and two on top. One of the chairs should teeter when placed on top but is caught and steadied by the actor who placed it. The actors leave the stage with the actor who steadied the chair coming up last.

A long pause of silence on the furniture in its new configuration.

The actors return to the stage, again six taking a chair each and two taking the desk. They attempt to return the table and chairs to their original configuration, the chairs in a haphazard pile in front of the desk. One of the actors takes a chair with them to the back left of the stage and sits down on it facing away from the audience. The other actors notice this and speak in hushed tones to one another (the audience shouldn't be able to make out what is said). They eventually leave the stage in a rush with the sole actor still left in the chair at the back of the stage.

A long pause of silence on the furniture in its new (and final) configuration. The actor still remains silent and unmoving in the chair at the back of the stage.

The curtain closes on this scene.

End.

Trunk.

Characters:

Man – A man in a dirty black suit. Looks dishevelled. Looks worn down, worn out.

Act 1.

The curtain opens on an empty stage. Nothing.

A long silence.

From off stage The Man pulls a huge trunk, like a soldier's foot locker, long, heavy, burdensome. He pulls it on to stage with both hands as though hauling it from someplace. Once it is fully on stage he takes it with one hand and begins dragging it towards the opposite side of the stage.

MAN: Again, yep yep. Again. Again again again again again again again. Yep, yep. Yep yep. Again again again again. Yep yep. Again. Yep yep yep yep. Again again.

He speaks this way until he reaches the other side of the stage. He stops talking in order to cumbersomely turn the trunk around and head back in the opposite direction (where he has just come from).

MAN: No no. Not that. Not that way. No No. Not that way. Not again that way. Away it was. Away it went. No no not that way. That way was when. That way was gone and gone and away. No No. Not that way not that way.

He reaches the other side of the stage and again turns the trunk around and heads back to the other side. He continues on like this, walking back and forth across the stage dragging the trunk behind him.

MAN: Without the water. Yes. Yes. Without the water and the cut. Yes without the water and the cut. The cut, the cut and the water and the water. That was the way. Yes. Yes. That was the way.

Turns.

MAN: And without sound. No not that sound. Without sound the way it came and ring ring ring ring ring ring. All that sound. No more of that sound. No. No more of that sound.

Turns.

MAN: To put it on the finger. Then turn it. Turn it when it is put on the finger. First to put it on the finger and then turn. Turn it so that it goes round and round and it is complete then. Then that makes it complete.

He turns and heads back to the other side of the stage. Not speaking, this time he coughs as he pulls the trunk, coughing louder and louder until he reaches the middle of the stage. He drops the trunk still coughing into his hand.

He stops coughing and calmly lays down. Closes his eyes as though sleeping.

A long moment of silence.

He slowly stands up and opens the trunk retrieving a pair of scissors.

He sneezes.

Once the sneeze has left him he cuts a small piece of hair from his head. He releases the hair and lets it drop to the floor. He then cuts the ends of each sleeve of his jacket making the cuts almost identical on each sleeve.

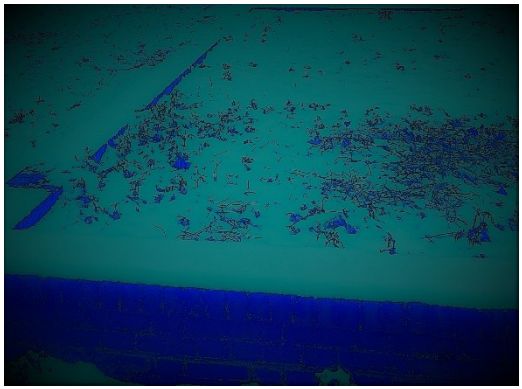
He sneezes.

He wipes his nose on his sleeve then stares blankly at the audience. He remains silent for a long time.

MAN (*screaming*): What more is there!

He returns to silence. Calmly places the scissors back into the trunk. Closes the trunk and then begins pulling it to the side of the stage where he originally entered.

Once he has completely left the stage there is a long moment of silence.



End.

Cases.

Characters:

Man: Entirely naked.

Woman: Entirely naked.

Third person: Unseen

Act 1.

The curtain opens to two large rectangular glass cases on the stage. They are smeared with a black substance so that nothing can be seen through the glass.

A moment of silence on the still glass cases.

The man wipes away the substance with his hand so that his face can be seen. He looks forward without expression.

MAN: I smell something. No not something, definitely not something. It smells more like, like, like…

He goes blank again staring forward.

He snaps out of it.

MAN: I think it was easier then. When? I think it was then. I think, I think it was then that it was easier?
WOMAN (*unseen inside her case*): Not anymore it isn't.
MAN: Why?
WOMAN: Why not?
MAN: Why not what?
WOMAN: Exactly.

He turns his head so that he is facing the woman's case.

MAN: Did you?
WOMAN: Never.
MAN: Are you?
WOMAN: Never.
MAN: Would you mind…?
WOMAN: Of course.

The Woman wipes away a circle in her case so that her face is visible. She stares directly forward looking blank.

The Man looks straight ahead.

WOMAN: I see stovepipes… No not stovepipes, landmines.

The man and woman speak over the top of each other as though neither will acknowledge the other.

WOMAN: The landmines in the field are much nicer this time of year.
MAN: It's as though they couldn't think of it, can you, can you think of it?
WOMAN: And the trifecta is even more important now that it's gone.
MAN: It's not that they can't think, it's just, well it's just that it's, well it's

a trouble of the glands, is that right? Perhaps that is right, the glands? But they can't think. They can't think at all.

WOMAN: And then the afternoons get so delightful. They were so, so, so delightful. Yes delightful.

MAN: And of all the other things, they come and go and come and go and on and on and on and on. And all those other things.

WOMAN: I wonder how they make it this time of year? If this time of year is the correct thing to say?

MAN: And on with the nothing of it all. I suppose that would be right wouldn't it?

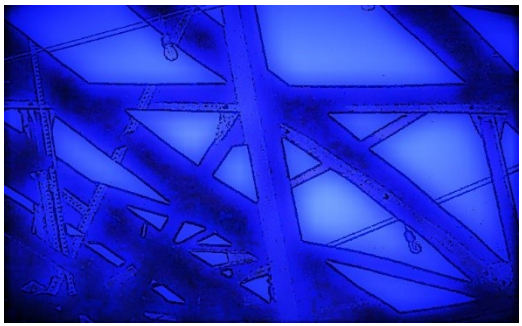
WOMAN: And so much of it has been taken that you can't think of it. But it's there none the less. What a thing for it to be.

MAN/WOMAN (*speaking simultaneously*): It was so empty!

The stage goes silent for a long moment.

The man turns his head to face the woman. They speak separately now.

MAN: Is that all there is now?



The woman turns to face the man.

WOMAN: I would say so.
MAN: You don't?
WOMAN: I wouldn't think so.
MAN: But…
WOMAN: No.

A loud mechanical sound like the grinding of enormous gears rings out.

A moment of silence in the wake of the sound.

MAN: Did you hear that?
WOMAN: I didn't hear anything.
MAN: It was so loud.
WOMAN: I didn't hear anything.
MAN: Are you deaf?
WOMAN: No.
MAN: Are you deaf?

WOMAN: No.
MAN: Could you become deaf?
WOMAN: I suppose a person could.
MAN: Have you become deaf
WOMAN: I suppose a person could.
MAN: Could you?
WOMAN: A person could.
MAN: Are you?
WOMAN: Am I what?
MAN: Are you a person?
WOMAN: I suppose.
MAN: So you could become deaf?
WOMAN: I'm not.
MAN: But you could?
WOMAN: I suppose.
MAN: Good.
WOMAN: Good.

A moment of silence as they both look forward with blank expressions.

MAN: But you didn't hear it?
WOMAN: I didn't hear anything.

A moment of silence.

MAN: What time is it?
WOMAN: I don't.
MAN: What time is it?
WOMAN: I can't.
MAN: Do you have the time?
WOMAN: Yes, yes I have the time.

MAN: Would you…
WOMAN: Yes, yes.
MAN: Do you have the time?
WOMAN: I do, I do but it's…
MAN: Is it incalculable?
WOMAN: That's not my word.
MAN: But it is incalculable?
WOMAN: In a different word.
MAN: You don't know the time?
WOMAN: Not the exact time.
MAN: Does it…
WOMAN: And again and again and again and again and again and again on and on and on and on and on and on and on and without a pause or an end or a beginning of the end or an end of the beginning. With or without or inside or outside or within or without or inside or outside. Inside or outside?

She turns her head towards the man expecting a response.

He is silent for a moment.

MAN: Both I think. Yes, yes I think both really. Really it has to be both.
WOMAN: Not my words.
MAN: They aren't?
WOMAN: No, not my words.
MAN: What words?'
WOMAN: Not those.
MAN: But…?
WOMAN: Not those.

The man bangs both fists against the case in frustration silencing them both.

A moment of silence after the sound.

MAN: I'll be stuck like this now. I won't move. I can't move. No, no. I can't. No I shouldn't. I shouldn't move. I should be stuck like this. If all… If all things are well I should be stuck like this.
WOMAN: What things?
MAN: What?
WOMAN: What things?
MAN: What things what?
WOMAN: That need to be well.
MAN: I don't…
WOMAN: What things need to be well?
MAN: I don't…
WOMAN: You don't?
MAN: I don't…

The Woman motions to place her hands against the case in the same way as the Man's.

WOMAN: Should I?

The man, with hands still on the case turns his head to look at the woman.

MAN: No.
WOMAN: But you are…
MAN: I'm stuck this way. Or I should be.
WOMAN: If all things are well?

MAN: Yes. Yes if all things are well.
WOMAN: So all things are not well?
MAN: I don't know.
WOMAN: All things are not well.
MAN: You don't know.
WOMAN: I know.
MAN: You don't know.
WOMAN: I know.
MAN (*yelling*): You don't know!

The man bangs his hands against the case in frustration again. Even as he does it he realises that he has moved and that he is not stuck in the position as he had thought.

A moment of silence as the man returns to his original position inside the case.

WOMAN: Is there an air of mystery to it?
MAN: Perhaps.
WOMAN: Yes?
MAN: I don't…
WOMAN: Yes or no?
MAN: To…
WOMAN: Is there an air of mystery to it?
MAN: I remember as a child.
WOMAN: Yes?
MAN: I think, I think I was a child. That I remember. I think I was a child.
WOMAN: I wasn't.
MAN: You weren't a child?

WOMAN: I wasn't there.
MAN: In my memory?
WOMAN: Yes.
MAN: No.
WOMAN: Why not?
MAN: I was a child.
WOMAN: I know you were a child. Where was I?
MAN: I don't know.
WOMAN: You should.
MAN: I don't.
WOMAN: You should.
MAN: I can't.
WOMAN (*yelling*): You should. You should. You should.

A moment of silence after her outburst.

MAN: I should?
WOMAN: Please.
MAN: But, I should?
WOMAN: Please.
MAN: But…
WOMAN: Please.
MAN: Is there a hole in it?
WOMAN: Don't.
MAN: I know.
WOMAN: Don't.
MAN: I know. I know there is a hole in it.
WOMAN: Don't, don't, don't!

The Man turns towards the woman and places his hand against the side of the case, as if reaching out to her.

MAN: Does it still sound the same?
WOMAN: That is not a question.
MAN: Isn't it?
WOMAN: That is not my question.
MAN: But there was wasn't there?
WOMAN: That is not my question. but there was. Yes. Yes there was.
MAN: How long?
WOMAN: Since?
MAN: Yes.
WOMAN: Yes.

A long pause as they both turn to face forward in their original positions.

WOMAN: It hurt my gums you know? There was a lot of that there and then. That sound. And that movement. There was always so much of that movement. The way it came, the way it came and it came and it went. It was always like that then, always, always like that. And then my gums started to hurt and so I shouted. I shouted for them to turn the clock so I could not see it but they

wouldn't. Why wouldn't they? Why wouldn't they?

MAN: I don't…

She cuts him off.

WOMAN: That was the way it was. I suppose, I suppose. That was the way. But my gums. You see my gums still hurt. They still hurt and it won't stop. Why didn't they? Why didn't they let it all stop?

A brief pause.

MAN: I can't remember the sound anymore. Can you believe that?

WOMAN: It was a good sound.

MAN: A good sound.

WOMAN: A very good sound.

The Man coughs loudly. A moment of silence. Now the Woman coughs in almost an identical way. She stops.

A long moment of silence.

END ACT 1.

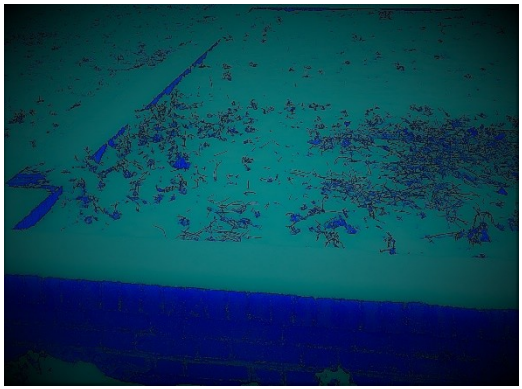
ACT 2.

The same setup as Act 1 only now there is a third case on the stage between the Man and Woman only slightly further back so that the Man and Woman can still see one another.

MAN: How long?
WOMAN: How long?
MAN: Yes, how long?
WOMAN: Not long.
MAN: How long?
WOMAN: Always.
MAN: I can see that.
WOMAN: Can you see now?
MAN: I could always.
WOMAN: No.
MAN: Yes, yes I could always.
WOMAN: I knew better.
MAN: Better?
WOMAN: I knew better.
MAN: For how long?
WOMAN: Since.
MAN: Oh, I see.
WOMAN: No.
MAN: Only I…I wish.
WOMAN: Yes I know.
MAN: Didn't I once. You know I think I did once used to have…
WOMAN: Yes I remember that too.
MAN: Then it was?

WOMAN: Yes.
MAN: Good.
WOMAN: Yes. Yes it is good.

A moment of silence as they look happily yet blankly forward.



WOMAN: It is loudly silent, don't you think?
MAN: I don't…
WOMAN: Like the way those waves were. Do you remember the waves? The ones that came down on our hands. Our hands that were outstretched. We had to pull them back in.
MAN: Mine shook. Mine were, mine were shaking.
WOMAN: Are they?

The Man looks down at his hands which the audience cannot see. Studies them.

MAN: Yes?
WOMAN: No.
MAN: I think…I think.
WOMAN: No.
MAN: Yes, yes. No. Yes, no is right. No is right.
WOMAN: And the collision?
MAN: It's been replaced.
WOMAN: Surely.
MAN: It has, of course it has.
WOMAN: It has to have been.
MAN: Yes, yes of course.
WOMAN: I told you. I told you that when it went, when it went and folded. When it was the collision. The collision. The collision? What is that word? What is that word to me?
MAN: I don't…
WOMAN: What is that word to me?
MAN: I don't…I don't.
WOMAN: What is that word for me?
MAN: I think. I think to come back.
WOMAN: Yes?
MAN: Yes, yes I think that was right. I think to come back was right. Does that sound right to you?
WOMAN: I cannot hear.

MAN: Are you deaf?
WOMAN: I've already said.
MAN: Oh.

A moment of silence.

MAN (*motioning towards the new case in the middle of the two*): Should we?
WOMAN: I don't see it.
MAN: It is solid.
WOMAN: I don't see it.
MAN: It is an object.
WOMAN: I don't see it.
MAN: It came. I can't. It arrived. I can't. It came and it arrived. It arrived and came at the same time. It has been here. How long has it been here? It has been here for a long time. It has always been here. Has it always been here? Yes. Yes it has always been here.
WOMAN: I remember before.
MAN: Before?
WOMAN: There was a before.
MAN: No.
WOMAN: Yes there was a before.
MAN: No.
WOMAN (*speeding up as she says it until she reaches a speed where she is almost not saying anything at all*): Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes

yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes
yes yes.

The Man goes to speak but instead coughs.

A moment of silence.

MAN: And if it buckled?
WOMAN: Not without sound.
MAN: But if it did. If it shook, if it shook and buckled.
WOMAN: What is that? There are no hands.

The Man holds his hands up in front of himself to study them.

WOMAN: There are no hands.

He puts them quickly away.

WOMAN: And if they come it will be like the landmines all over again. And the type the endless clack clack clack clack. That broken beak with its timing and its ringing. It was a machine you know? An old machine. Made mostly of paper.

Paper and something lighter than paper. Did you ever see it?

MAN: No I…

WOMAN: If you had ever seen it you would know there are no hands.

MAN: But.

WOMAN: You would know it.

Man: Yes?

WOMAN: Yes.

A moment of silence.

The Man begins to speak but before he can make any sound he is cut off by the loud mechanical sound. This time the sound is more laboured, grinding in its quality.

Once the sound ends there is a moment of silence.

WOMAN: And then there is that.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: That thing. That quality.

MAN: What is a quality?

WOMAN: It is that thing, that thing.

MAN: Did I used to be here?

WOMAN: That isn't my word.

MAN: But it was. It was in the colour. When there was no colour. Was there colour?

WOMAN: I've told you that isn't my word.

MAN: I need it.
WOMAN: Yes.
MAN: The silence?
WOMAN: Yes.
MAN: The silence.
WOMAN: Yes.
MAN: I like this silence.
WOMAN: There is no like.
MAN: But my hands?
WOMAN: There are no hands.
MAN: But the sound?
WOMAN: There is no sound.

The Man motions towards the middle case.

MAN: And him?
WOMAN: Him?
MAN: And her?
WOMAN: Her?
MAN: And it?
WOMAN: Not my word.
MAN: But I can move.
WOMAN: Only left.
MAN: Not only.
WOMAN: Yes only. Only this and only that. Only, only, only, only.
MAN: There is a rotation.
WOMAN: In what manner?
MAN: From the south.
WOMAN: What south?
MAN: The south. From the south.

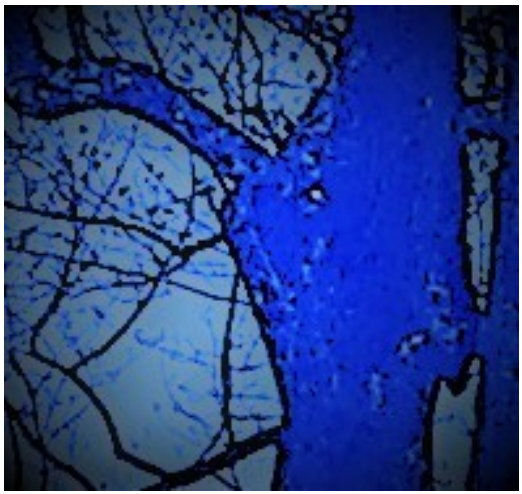
WOMAN: There is no south.
MAN: There is rotation.
WOMAN: Yes, but not like.
MAN: Not like?
WOMAN: There is no like in this rotation.
MAN: But there is rotation.
WOMAN: Yes. Yes there could be but only without like.
MAN: There is no like in this rotation.
WOMAN: There is no like in this rotation.

Both stare blankly forward.

A long moment of silence.

The Woman uses her hand to clear an area in the black substance revealing her bare stomach. She then holds her hand to her face. Studying it.

WOMAN: Will it, do you think?
MAN: Not without. Not without the landmine as it was. And that smell. Can you forget that smell?
WOMAN: Not in the way you would say.
MAN: I cannot say it.
WOMAN: I know.



A moment of silence. Both the man and woman stare blankly forward.

MAN: Will that do then?
WOMAN: Yes. I think it will.
MAN: Okay.
WOMAN: Okay.
MAN: O…
WOMAN: O…

Simultaneously both The Man and The Woman try to speak but cannot make a sound. They try again and still nothing. They both briefly look terrified and then return to their blank, unemotional stare.

A moment of silence.

Curtain close.

End.

Scaffold

Characters:

Woman: Dressed in enormously oversized white smock. It billows all around her, drags on the ground.

Act 1.

Curtain opens onto an empty stage.

Moment of silence.

The Woman enters the stage carrying with her two long metal scaffolding poles.

WOMAN (*without looking at the audience)*: Can you see I am building?

She places the two poles gently onto the ground. They ring out slightly as they touch the stage/each other.

WOMAN: And here caught without the writer. That is the typewriter. That is. That is.

Pause.

WOMAN: Can you see I am building?

She picks up one of the poles and places it on top of the other. They should ring out as they touch.

She waits until the sound has completely stopped.

WOMAN: There are longer things than this. But this will do. This will do though there are longer things.

She moves the poles so they run parallel to one another with a space between.

With her back to the audience she waits for a moment, looking down at the poles. Then she slowly and cautiously lays down between them on her chest.

She lays in silence for a long moment.

She turns herself over.

WOMAN: And it is a consequence, isn't it? I would have been told once. Once I would have been told, but no longer. But it is a consequence. This thing.

She sits up, facing the audience.

WOMAN: And it is the writer. The typewriter. It is a production. It is, it is.

She slowly stands.

WOMAN: Can you see I am writing?

She turns and walks off stage. She returns with a small building brick.

She stands between the two poles for a moment before placing the brick exactly in the middle of them.

She turns and faces the audience.

WOMAN: I wrote this.

She walks off stage again, this time returning with a plain white vase.

She stands between the two poles as she had done with the brick and then places the vase on top of the brick.

She turns and faces the audience.

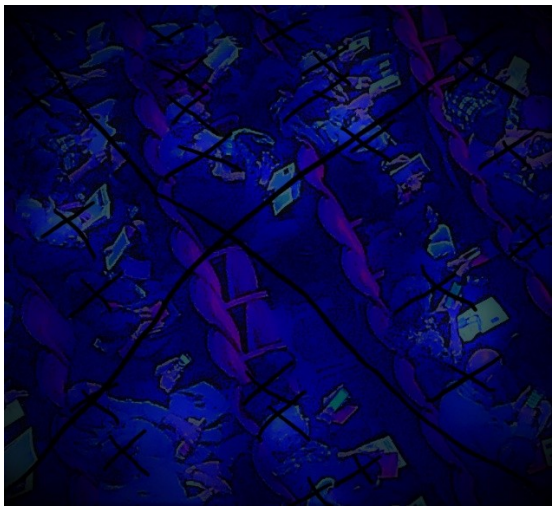
WOMAN: What more is there in this writing, building? Not wheel. Not wheel and not spread. Can you see I am building, writing?

She walks off stage and returns with a second brick. She stands between the poles as before and then slowly, cautiously places the second brick on top of the vase.

She turns and faces the audience.

WOMAN *(she speaks faster and faster until her words become a garbled mess)*: Building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing, building, writing…

She goes on and on like this for a long time, ever faster, her words more garbled until the curtain slowly closes on her. She continues to speak even with the curtain closed, on and on as the theatre lights come on. On and on until the audience leaves in its entirety.



End.

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